

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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THE VANISHERS.

Sweetest of all childlike dreams
In the simple Indian lore
Still to me the legend seems
Of the shapes who flit before,—
Flitting, passing, seen and gone,
Never reached nor found at rest,
Baffling search, but beckoning on
To the Sunset of the Blest.
From the clefts of mountain rocks,
Through the dark of lowland firs,
Flash the eyes and flow the locks
Of the mystic Vanishers!
And the fisher in his skiff
And the hunter on the moss
Hear their call from cape and cliff,
See their hands the birch-leaves toss.
Wistful, longing, through the green
Twilight of the clustered pines,
In their faces, rarely seen,
Beauty more than mortal shines.
Fringed with gold, their mantles flow,
On the slopes of westerling knolls;
In the wind they whisper low
Of the Sunset Land of Souls.
Doubt who may, O friend of mine,
Thou and I have seen them, too;
On before, with beck and sign,
Still they glide, and we pursue.

More than clouds of purple trail
In the gold of setting day;
More than gleams of wing or sail
Beckon from the sea-mist gray.

Glimpses of immortal youth,
Gleams and glories seen and flown,
Far-heard voices sweet with truth,
Airs from viewless Eden blown,—

Beauty that eludes our grasp,
Sweetness that transcends our taste,
Loving hands we may not clasp,
Shining feet that mock our haste,—

Gentle eyes we closed below,
Tender voices heard once more,
Smile and call us as they go
On and onward, still before.

Guided thus, O friend of mine!
Let us walk our little way,
Knowing by each beckoning sign
That we are not quite astray.

Chase we still, with baffled feet,
Smiling eye and waving hand,
Sought and seeker soon shall meet,
Lost and found, in Sunset Land.

— *John G. Whittier.*

SELF-DENIAL.

Is spiritual life an unending struggle?
Are we never to feel secure? Is vigilance
never to be suspended? Are we never to
breathe freely? Is there no haven of peace?
Yes, there is a haven of peace; only you are
never so blessed that you may not be more
blessed, you are never so high that you may
not be higher, you are never so peaceful
that you can have no more of the fulness of
life in God. Is that a thing to complain of?
The Christian life is a continual renewal,
but only as a walk up a mountain is a con-
tinual ascent; and, if the mountain is im-
measurable, being, indeed, the heights of
God's own nature, then, of course, the last
summit is never reached. But, if the ascent
is ever-freshened health, power, and joy, it

is matter of privilege, not of hardship, that we are called to ascend forever. Are we imperfect beings aiming to live after heavenly models? Of course, that implies effort and the lifting of our eyes to what is above us. And, if we are what we say we are, children and heirs of God, can we ever be anything else than imperfect beings aiming to live after heavenly models? The direct struggle with evil may, indeed, fall from us, and ought to have fallen from us long since; but the throb of aspiration can never cease in a child of God. God does not call us, however we may doom ourselves, to a repeated contest with the same foes nor for the same prize. The warfare of the child is not the warfare of the man. The warfare of the man is not the warfare of the immortal, that we should think of one decisive victory, and of ever after holding our crown in perpetuity. If we must strive without ceasing, the fault is our own if it be not daily from a higher station and for a fresh glory. It is this truth which makes self-denial a perpetual element in that goodness which Christ inspires with the love and imitation of God. If our aim were short of this, effort might cease with the perfection of habit. It is this which requires a son of God to take up his cross, not on one great occasion, but daily; for daily is he called to transcend the past and to receive more of the spirit of his Father. New opportunities, new possibilities, open on advancing steps. Daily and hourly in the eternal festival God calls the humble ones, who raise meek eyes of aspiration, to come up and take a higher place nearer to himself; and at his command they must obey, or forfeit their place in their Father's house. But two things are to be remembered: first, that effort is not necessarily pain, often indeed in itself the highest joy and always essential to it; and, secondly, that self-denial is not the denial of all our desires, for there must be at least one desire permitted to have its way, one desire indulged, and that the highest of all, the master of all, the desire to be one with God, since that is the very desire out of which the denial of self proceeds. What, then, is self-denial in its Christian sense? For, clearly, when we deny ourselves, we are the deniers: it is one self denying another self,—the real self, clothed with divine authority, denying the

lower and usurping self. It relates to the rightful dominion of conscience and the spiritual affections, overruling the sway of the meaner tendencies. It is our soul's denial of the selfish part of us, of ease, of sloth, of pleasure, and of power, that the affections which have not self for their object may find us ready for their service. It is the supremacy of our sense of right among the multitude of our prompters or against the resistance of our inclinations. It is the starving and binding up of ungenerous desires, that nobler desires may have free course and be glorified. It is a command over the sensual passions of anger, fear, envy, jealousy, and irritable impatience, that other powers, which bring only strength and joy and love, may be the masters of our being. If it mortifies a lower self-love, it is that a nobler self-knowledge may lift a meek and strong heart to God. It refuses a present pleasure only because it is a pleasure that goodness, reason, conscience, faith, hope, and charity could not then take in peace. When it restrains the love of gain, it is because it is pursuing priceless wealth,—a gold that the world cannot assay. When it withstands the pleadings of indolence, it is that the great ends of life may not be lost in sloth, sold away for a price on a par with Esau's pottage. If there were no higher demands of our nature, there would be no reason that the lower ones should be restrained. For self-denial is no monkish virtue, no negative discipline, no recluse's safety, no ascetic's way of recommending himself to God, no pale, timid shadow shrinking from the light and denying itself the natural joys of man, no self-inflicted pain, the price paid here for the escape from pain hereafter, no abject creeping on the earth that a power to whom abjectness is pleasing may deign to cast his eye upon us: it is the upward life of a child of God, loving what God loves, refusing to be in bondage to anything that would remove him from the light of his Father's face.—
John Hamilton Thom.

THE STILL HOUR.

My God and Father, I will pray
 For help to guide me on my way:
 Oh, teach me from my heart to say,
 Thy will be done!

As gentle showers softly fall,
Thy loving kindness blesses all.
Light of the world, on thee I call :

Thy will be done.

Grant me to aid in thy design
To make this earth a home of thine,
To labor on, and not repine.

Thy will be done.

Show me the path that I should tread,
And, by thy gracious spirit led,
Keep me therein, safe husbanded.

Thy will be done.

My will is thine, to do thy will ;
Say to my anxious heart, Be still.
Oh, may thy peace my bosom fill.

Thy will be done.

How great is all thy love to me,
While tossed on life's tempestuous sea !
Let my soul's haven be with thee.

Thy will be done.

— W. M., in *Morning Light*.

To accept the will of God is not to surrender, but to order a charge. To say, "Thy will be done," is not to sink back discouraged and resigned before misfortune or sin, but to consecrate ourselves unreservedly to warfare against it and at last to complete victory over it. It is not the prayer of resignation, but the prayer of enlistment.—*The Christian Life*.

Nothing is eternal but that which is done for God and for others. That which is done for self dies. Perhaps it is not wrong, but it perishes. You say it is pleasure. Well, enjoy it. But joyous recollection is no longer joy. That which ends in self is mortal. That alone which goes out of self into God lasts forever.—*Frederick W. Robertson*.

Each individual experiences in life that which will sooner or later uplift, no matter how direful and seemingly unholy the process through which he must pass may be. . . . The need and circumstance of the individual have developed the existing condition ; and through it, from stage to stage, that soul will climb.—*God's Light as it came to me*.

PRAYER.

O God, our help and strength, speak to each one of us the word we need. Thou alone canst see our inner longing for more

strength and goodness, thou alone canst know our scorn for our own weakness and the bitterness of that self-reproach with which we remember our failures. Let thy light so shine into our hearts and thy love so bless our daily lives that we may forsake the wrong things and seek ever to enter more and more into thy heaven of purity and truth. Send thy blessing to those that are dear to us, and for whom we would pray as for ourselves. May thy kingdom come in all our hearts, and may thy will be done now and always. Amen.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 19 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass. Old correspondents will please address the members to whom they have formerly written. In order to receive books from the Cambridge Branch, it will be necessary henceforth to send a reference with the first request.

Educational.

"Geological Stories"; "Common Words Difficult to spell"; "English Composition," Chittenden; "A Guide to the Determination of Rocks"; "Sight Arithmetic," Bradbury; "Numbers Applied," Rickoff; "Our World Reader, No. I."; "First Reader," Stickney; "Heart of Oak Books," Nos. 3 and 4; "Light," Meyer and Barnard; "Practical Exercises in English," Buehler; "Spelling Book," Worcester; "Word by Word," Stickney; "American History," Sheldon; "Entomology," Kirby and Spence; "History of the United States," Johnston; "School Grammar," Longman; "English Grammar," Whitney and Lockwood; "Health," Corfield; "Stepping Stones to Literature"; "History of Greece," Oman.

Juvenile.

"Kindergarten Gem"; "Grandmamma's Rhymes and Chimes"; "Short Stories about Animals"; "Bright Daisies"; "Frank Leslie's Christmas Book"; "Sugar Plums"; "The Little Showan Series"; "Why?"; "Sun-dials, or How Mammies tell Time"; "Ballad of the Lost Hare"; "Queer People," Palmer Cox.

Magazines.

Harper's, 1896-1901; *Popular Science Monthly*, 1899; *Atlantic Monthly*, 1900; *New England Magazine*, 1901.

The following books are offered by the Women's Alliance, Second Church, Salem, Mass. Address Miss L. Adele Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass.

With first request please send a reference.

"Life of Saint Paul"; "The Insight of Faith," Rev. H. W. Foote; "Formation of Christian Character," Rev. Henry Ware; "Sermons," by Dr. James Flint; "The True and the Beautiful," John Ruskin; "The Last Leaf" (illustrated poem); "Practical Speller"; "Language Lessons," Swinton; "History of United States," Quackenbos; "Chronological History of United States; Franklin's "Arithmetic"; Hagar's "Arithmetic"; "French Plays, College Series," Vols. I, II.; "French Grammar," Bagard; "Le Française," literary review magazine; "The Lamplighter"; "Short Stories," Dickens; "Black Beauty"; *Harper's Magazine*, 1894.

REQUESTS.

[Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send requests, offers, or letters of thanks to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

My mother, Mrs. Rachel McCabe, has received quite a number of kind letters from the *Cheerful Letter* ladies, also a lot of good literature. I live in quite a lonely part of the country, and would appreciate any reading matter. I prefer novels or magazines, and sometimes I like poetry. I should enjoy corresponding with some of the sisters of the *Cheerful Letter*. Mrs. R. B. Price, Stoneville, North Carolina.

I live in the new country, have three little boys aged nine, six, and three, and would like to receive books and magazines for myself and children. I would like to have *The Cheerful Letter*, but have not the money to send for it. Mrs. Mary McFarland, Roosevelt, Oklahoma.

I am a farmer's little girl. I live thirteen miles from any town. I have one sister twelve years old and three little brothers, the oldest ten, the next eight, and the youngest six. I have very few books to read. I would be very glad to receive a "History of the United States," "Home Book for Mothers and Daughters," "Daisy Ward's Book," and anything that is nice for little boys to read, and oblige Ada Nance, Reuben, North Carolina.

Miss Lizzie M. Bailey, Monroe, Maine, asks for "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush" also "Gospel Hymns."

C. B. Frazelle, Swansboro, North Carolina, wants "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Leopard Spots," by Thomas Dixon, Jr., for a loan library.

Miss Mary Dameron, 625 Cabell Street, Lynchburg, Virginia, asks for a copy of the "Rubaiyat."

I have been unable to thank *all* who have so kindly remembered me, as some have sent no address; but I do thank each one in my own name and in the names of many others who also read what I get.

I wish some of the kind friends would

send good reading to Mr. William Heath, Mingus, Texas, and any school-books suitable for children from five to twelve years. It will be greatly appreciated, as he is intellectual and very fond of reading, but is an invalid and unable to purchase much reading or all the school-books his children need. I know he will pass on a large part of what he receives. Mrs. E. B. Benson, Mingus, Texas.

I came across a copy of *Cheerful Letter* to-day, and am delighted with it. I am a poor girl, without father and mother, not strong. I am in poor health, and have to sew for my living, and can't find much sewing to do. I live away out in the country, ten or twelve miles from a railroad and two miles from church. We don't have preaching but once a month. I have no way of going to church, only walking; and, when the weather's not good, I have to stay at home. I am a member of the church, and am trying to live a Christian life.

If any one ever needed cheering reading, I am sure it is me; and I will be grateful for anything.

Won't you please send me some reading matter? I am very fond of reading, but am not able to buy any books. It is all I can do to make a plain, plain living. I live in a lonely, solitary place, and have no society, am lonely nearly all the time.

I would be glad to get any of the standard novels,—Hawthorne's, Kingsley's, Cooper's, Smiles's, Scott's, Dickens's, also E. P. Roe's works and Louisa Alcott's. I will be glad of as many books as you can send, also *The Cheerful Letter*. Ollie George, Cedar Hill, North Carolina.

We have three children, all small, and, owing to our house being burned, am not able to afford anything for reading. I will be glad of any you kind people will send me, and will pass on after reading to others like myself not able to afford much for reading. Mrs. J. A. Pickerel, Nettle Ridge, Patrick County, Virginia.

Mrs. L. M. Glenn, Mound City, Missouri, will be glad of any books of natural history, poems, or any of E. P. Roe's works.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[Contributions to this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, 26 Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.]

THE MOTHER AT HOME (continued).

BY JOHN S. C. ABBOTT, 1833.

Never think that your child is too young to obey. We are ingenious in framing excuses for neglecting our duty with our children. At one time they are too young, again they are too sick. Some parents always find an excuse of one kind or another for letting their children have their own way. A child may, at a very early age, be taught obedience. We can easily teach a kitten or a little dog that it must not touch the meat which is placed before the fire, that it must leave the room when bidden, and a thousand other acts of ready obedience. A Frenchman has recently collected a large number of canary birds for a show. He has taught them such implicit obedience to his voice as to march them in platoons across the room, and directs them to the ready performance of many simple manoeuvres. Now can it be admitted that a child fifteen months or two years of age is inferior in understanding to a canary bird? And must the excuse be made for such a child that he does not know enough to be taught obedience? A very judicious mother, who has brought up a large family of children, all of whom are now in situations of respectability and usefulness, remarked that it was her practice to obey her children for the first year of their life, but ever after she expected them to obey her. She, of course, did not mean by this remark that the moment the child was one year of age a sudden and total change took place in her management. During the early months of its infancy she considered it to be her duty to do everything in her power to make the child comfortable and happy. She would endeavor to anticipate all its wants. She would be obedient to the wishes of the child. But, by the time the child was one year of age, she considered it old enough to be brought under the salutary regulations of a well-disciplined family. I am aware that many parents will say that this is altogether too early a period to commence the government of a child; and others equally nu-

merous, perhaps, will say that it is too late, —that a beginning should be made at a much earlier period. In fact, the principle which really ought to guide in such a case is this: that the authority of the mother ought to be established over the child as soon as it is able to understand a command or prohibition, expressed by looks and gestures. This is at a much earlier period than most parents imagine. Let the mother who doubts it try the experiment, and see how easily she can teach her child that he must not touch the tongs or andirons, or that, when sitting in her lap at table, he must not touch the cups and saucers. A child may be taught obedience in such things then as well as at any period of its life. And how much trouble does a mother save herself by having her child thus early taught to obey! How much pain and sorrow does she save her child by accustoming it, in its most tender years, to habits of prompt obedience!

Guard against too much severity. By pursuing a steady course of efficient government, severity will very seldom be found necessary. If, when punishment is inflicted, it is done with composure and with solemnity, occasions for punishment will be very unfrequent. Let a mother ever be affectionate and mild with her children. Let her sympathize with them in their little sports. Let her gain their confidence by her assiduous efforts to make them happy. And let her feel, when they have done wrong, not irritated, but sad, and punish them in sorrow, but not in anger. Fear is a useful and a necessary principle in family government. God makes use of it in governing his creatures. But it is ruinous to the disposition of a child exclusively to control him by this motive. How unhappy must be that family where the parent always sits with a face deformed with scowls, and where the voice is always uttered in tones of severity and command! Such parents we do see. Their children fear them. They are always under restraint in their presence, and home becomes to them an irksome prison instead of the happy retreat of peace and joy. But where the mother greets her children with smiles, and rewards their efforts to please her with caresses, and addresses them in tones of mildness and affection, she is touching those chords in the human heart which vibrate in sweet harmony. She is calling

into action the noblest and the loveliest principles of our nature. And thus does she prepare the way for every painful act of discipline to come with effectual power upon the heart. The children know that she does not love to punish. In all cases in which it can be done, children should thus be governed by kindness. But, when kindness fails and disobedience ensues, let not the mother hesitate for a moment to fall back upon her last resort, and punish as severely as is necessary. A few such cases will teach almost any child how much better it is to be obedient than disobedient.

By being thus consistent and decided in government and commencing with the infancy of each child, in all ordinary cases great severity may be avoided. And it is never proper for a parent to be harsh and unfeeling and forbidding in her intercourse with her children. The most efficient family government may be almost entirely administered by affection if it be distinctly understood that disobedience cannot pass unpunished. I cannot but pity those unhappy children who dare not come to their parents in confidence and love, who are continually fearing stern looks and harsh words, and who are consequently ever desirous to get away from home, that they may enjoy themselves. Every effort should be made to make home the most desirable place, to gather around it associations of delight, and thus to form in the mind of your child an attachment for peaceful and purifying enjoyments. This will most strongly fortify his mind against vice. And, when he leaves the paternal roof, he will ever look back with fond recollections to its joys and with gratitude to those who made it the abode of so much happiness. In future years, too, when your children become the heads of families, they will transmit to their children the principles which you have implanted. Thus may the influence of your instructions extend to thousands yet unborn.

How little do we think of the tremendous responsibilities which are resting upon us, and of the wide influence, either for good or for evil, which we are exerting! We are setting in operation a train of causes which will go down through all coming time. Long after we have gone to our eternal home, our words and our actions will be

aiding in the formation of character. We cannot then arrest the causes which our lives have set in progress, and they will go on elevating immortals to virtue and to heaven or urging them onward in passion and sin and woe.

A TROUBLESOME BOY.

"He is the greatest plague of my life," said Mr. Kennedy. "I don't know what I shall do with him. He is continually getting into some mischief. I have shut him up a close prisoner in the state-room, and I am going to keep him there till we land. But it will do no good. It will not be an hour after he gets out before he will be in some scrape. You know a great deal about boys. I wish you would tell me what to do with him."

"I think, if he were under my charge," said Mr. George, very quietly, "I should *load* him."

"Load him?" repeated Mr. Kennedy, inquiringly.

"Yes," said Mr. George. "I mean I should give him a load to carry."

"I don't understand, exactly," said Mr. Kennedy. "What is your idea?"

"My idea is," said Mr. George, "that a growing boy, especially if he is a boy of unusual capacity, is like a steam-engine in this respect. A steam-engine must always have a load to carry,—that is, something to employ and absorb the force it is capable of exerting,—or else it will break itself to pieces with it. The force *will* expend itself on something; and, if you don't load it with something good, it will employ itself in mischief."

"Here now is the engine of this ship," continued Mr. George. "Its force is conducted to the paddle-wheels, where it has full employment for itself in turning the wheels against the immense resistance of the water and in carrying the ship along. This work is its *load*. If this load were to be taken off,—for example, if the steamer were to be lifted up out of the water, so that the wheels would spin round in the air,—the engine would immediately stave itself to pieces for want of having anything else to expend its energies upon."

"Yes," said Mr. Kennedy, "I have no doubt of it."

"Now, I think," continued Mr. George, "that it is in some sense the same with a boy whose mental and physical powers are in good condition. These powers must be employed. They hunger and thirst for employment; and, if they do not get it in doing good, they will be sure to find it in some kind of mischief."

"Well," said Mr. Kennedy, with a sigh, "there is a great deal in that; but what is to be done? You can't employ such a boy as that. There is nothing that he can do. I wish you would take him, and see if you can load him, as you call it. Take him with you on this tour you are going to make in Scotland. I will put money in your hands to cover his expenses, and you may charge anything you please beyond for your care of him."

"Perhaps his mother would not like such an arrangement," said Mr. George.

"Oh, yes," replied Mr. Kennedy. "Nothing would please her more."

"And would Waldron like it himself?" asked Mr. George.

"I presume so," said Mr. Kennedy. "He likes anything that is a change." . . .

"Now, Waldron," said Mr. George, when Waldron came to him, "I shall want some help from you about getting ashore from the boat. Do you think you could go ashore with Rollo as soon as we land, and take a cab and go directly up to the hotel, and engage rooms for us, while I am looking out for the baggage and getting it ready?"

"Yes, sir, yes, sir," said Waldron, eagerly. "I can do that. What hotel shall I go to?"

"I don't know," said Mr. George. "I don't know anything about the hotels in Glasgow. You must find out."

"Well," said Waldron, "only how shall I find out?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Mr. George. "I leave it all to you and Rollo. I am busy forming my plans for a tour. You and Rollo can go and talk about it, and see if you can discover any way of finding out the name of the best hotels. If you can't, after trying fifteen minutes come to me, and I will help you."

So saying, Mr. George began to study his map again; and Waldron, apparently much pleased with his commission, said, "Come, Rollo," and walked away.

I think that Mr. George was quite right in his idea, that the true remedy for the spirit of restlessness and mischief that Waldron manifested was to employ him, or, as he metaphorically termed it, to *load* him. And, as this volume will perhaps fall into the hands of many parents as well as children, I will here remark that a great many good-hearted and excellent boys fall into the same difficulty from precisely the same cause; namely, that they have not adequate employment for their mental and physical powers, which are growing and strengthening every day, and are hungering and thirsting for the means and opportunities of expending their energies.

Parents are seldom aware how fast their children are growing and increasing in strength, both of body and mind. The evidence of this growth, in respect to the limbs and muscles of the body, is, indeed, obvious to the eye; and, as the growth advances, we have continual proof of the pleasure which the exercise of these new powers gives to the possessor of them. The active and boisterous plays of boys derive their chief charm from the pleasure they feel in testing and exercising their muscular powers in every way. They are always running and leaping and wrestling, and pursuing each other, and pushing each other, and climbing up to high places, and standing on their heads, and walking on the tops of fences, and performing all other possible or conceivable feats which may give them the pleasure of working in new and untried ways their muscular machinery, and feeling its increasing power, and in producing new effects by means of it. They get themselves into continual difficulties and dangers by these things, and cause themselves a great deal of suffering. Still they go on; for the intoxicating delight of using their powers, or, rather, the irresistible instinct which impels them to use them, has greater force with them than all other considerations.

We see all this very plainly in respect to the action of the limbs and the organs of the body, for it is palpably evident to our senses; and we feel the necessity of providing safe and proper modes of expending these energies. Since we find, for example, that boys must kick something, we give them a football to kick, which, being a mere

ball of wind, may be kicked without doing any harm. And so with almost all the other playthings and sports which are devised for boys or which they devise for themselves. They are the means simply of enabling them to employ their growing powers and expand their energies without doing anybody any harm. We know very well that it is not safe to leave these powers and energies unemployed.

But we are very apt to forget that there are powers and faculties of the mind, equally vigorous and equally eager to be exercised, that ought also to be provided for. The strength of the will, the power of exercising judgment and discretion, the spirit of enterprise, the love of command, and other such mental impulses are growing and strengthening every day in every healthy boy; and they are all clamorous for employment. The instinct that impels them is so strong that they will find employment in some way or other for themselves, unless an occupation is otherwise provided for them. A very large proportion of the acts of mischievousness and wrong which boys commit arise from this cause. Even boys who are bad enough to form a midnight scheme for robbing an orchard are influenced mainly in perpetrating the deed, not by the pleasure of eating the apples which they expect to obtain by it, but by the pleasure of forming a scheme, of contriving ways and means of surmounting difficulties, of watching against surprises, of braving dangers, of successfully attaining to a desired end over and through a succession of obstacles interposing. This view of the case does not show that such deeds are right: it only shows the true nature of the wrong involved in them, and helps us in discovering and applying the remedy.—*Jacob Abbott, from "Rollo in Scotland."*

NATURAL HISTORY.

WHITE-WEED.

It has been our fortune this summer to live amid a luxuriant growth of white-weed, white-weed in the front yard, white-weed in the clothes-yard, white-weed at the kitchen door and under the parlor windows. From the fibrous root growing in bunches arose many tall stalks from eighteen to

twenty-four inches high, each crowned with a large blossom from two to three inches in diameter. Sometimes the stems were branched, and bore from three to seven flowers. A single clump, in some cases, comprised one hundred and fifty blossoms. These were very showy. The white-weed grows unbidden in all kinds of soil, and is not easily eradicated. It is a monopolist, taking possession of pastures and meadows where sweet grass — food for cattle — would otherwise grow. Nevertheless, it is so pretty one cannot wholly condemn it. We have hitherto ignorantly supposed that white-weed was the same plant as May-weed, and have called it indiscriminately by either name. As it bloomed in June, so near the month of May, we had not a doubt that it was May-weed. But Dr. Gray tells us that it is not May-weed at all, but white-weed, which is botanically quite distinct from May-weed. Both belong to the composite family, and have the same general habit of growth; but each also possesses some characteristics by which it is readily distinguished from the other.

The blossom of each has a yellow centre, called a disk, and a white circumference, called rays. Having spoken of this as a flower, we must correct the erroneous impression created thereby. Instead of being a flower, or one flower, it is in reality an aggregation or an assemblage of many flowers. Each little separate yellow tube of the disk, and there are hundreds of them, is a complete flower in itself, containing within its five-pointed cup or tube five stamens and a pistil. Such an inflorescence was formerly called by botanists a compound flower, but Dr. Gray says that such a crowd of flowers is no more a compound flower than a crowd of people is a compound man. The white-weed blooms in early summer. Its blossoms are larger and more showy than those of May-weed. The rays are not reflexed or curled under, as are those of May-weed shortly after their expansion. Each ray—the white petal of the circumference—contains a flowering organ called a pistil, scarcely visible to the naked eye, but seen with a pocket lens. It is enclosed in the short cylindrical portion of the ray which is attached to the receptacle. The ray of May-weed is neuter; that is, it has no flowering organ, neither pistil nor stamen. Under-

neath the flower is a circle of small green scales, the involucre, so named in composite flowers. The scales of white-weed are edged with a rusty brown color, May-weed with a whitish margin,—a dissimilarity easily observed. The stem-leaves, or foliage, of the two plants are quite unlike. White-weed has one leaf in a place, the edge jagged or toothed; and its base clasps the stem. May-weed has a compound leaf of finely cut parts.

White-weed is an annual without odor, May-weed a perennial strongly scented. White-weed grows in fields and meadows, May-weed by the roadsides. Of all wild flowers the white-weed seems the greatest favorite among insects. It is constantly visited by bees, bugs, spiders, beetles, ants, wasps, humble-bees, and a great many species of diptera or flies, from the most minute to the largest size. Many of the small diptera, having iridescent wings and wonderful coloring of head and body, resemble beautiful gems when they alight on this resplendent flower.

J. A.

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Contributions to this column may be sent to Miss K. C. Porter, 22 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass.]

I.

Concealed Weapons.

1. Can none be found to undertake the job?
2. There is a big log under all that moss.
3. About the third hour I fled from the field.
4. This word must be the last.
5. Kate's pearls are superb.
6. Mr. Carr owes me five dollars.

II.

He dreamed that the Frenchman's sword
still slew,
And triumphed the Frenchman's eagle,
The struggling Austrians fled anew
Like the hare before the beagle.

The bearded Russian he scourged again,
The Prussian camp was routed,
And again on the hills of haughty Spain
His mighty army shouted.

O'er Egypt's sands, o'er Alpine snows,
At the Pyramid, at the mountain

Where the wave of the lordly Danube flows,
And by the Italian fountain,

O'er the snowy cliffs where mountain stream
Dashed by the Switzer's dwelling,
He led again, in his dying dreams,
His host the broad earth quelling.

Who was he?

III.

Here is an acrostic of three verses spelling
the name and age of a man.

Faithful to your daily trust,
Ready at your duties' call,
Always gentle, always just,
Never mean and never small,
Kind and true you are to all.

Tugging, pulling, pushing ever
With a will that Fate defies,
Energy that tires never,
Never wavers, falters never,
That's the only way to rise.

Yes, and I repeat it, sir,
Faith in God and faith in grit
Overleap each yawning pit,
Undermine each barrier,
Robe and crown the conqueror.

IV.

Enigmas.

1. I am taken from the mine, confined in
a wooden case, and am used by many people.

2. I hear much, devour much, and reach
from pole to pole.

3. I'm a creature by travellers very well
known, and walk on the ice in the north
-frigid zone.

4. Never still for a month, but seen
mostly at night.

Answers to Puzzles in August Number.

I.

1. Tram — mart.
2. Elba — able.
3. Liar — rail.
4. Etna — ante.
5. Live — evil.
6. Brag — garb.
7. Sore — Eros.

II.

Pi.

In the wind in February
Snowflakes float still,
Half inclined to turn to rain,
Nipping, dripping, chill.
Then the thaws swell the streams,
And swollen rivers swell the sea.
If the winter ever ends,
How pleasant it will be!

III.

Anna — noon — noun — Anna.

IV.

Riddle.

Box.

V.

Table — lamp — chair.

VI.

Charade.

Sunday.

AVON PARK, FLA.,
July 29, 1902.

Dear Cheerful Letter friends,—Some of you are, no doubt, thinking me ungrateful or neglectful because of unanswered letters; but I trust you will pardon me when I tell you that I have been so very seriously ill during the past month or more that at one time no one thought I could possibly live, and I had made all arrangements for the end. As it will be some time before I will be strong enough to resume my correspondence, I take this way to most gratefully and lovingly thank you all for your great kindness in the past, and bespeak further favors for the future. As many of you know, I am a crippled shut-in, too ill and helpless to do anything but read and, at times, write. My life is very lonely, as my husband and I live all alone in the back woods. We have no children, and I have no living relatives except my devoted husband; so you see *why* books are joyfully received. I am passing on a great many to other needy ones. The Cheerful Letter work is doing a vast amount of good. The ones who first began it must certainly have been inspired.

Would it interest you to know that I will celebrate my semi-centennial birthday on October 8 next? It would make me very happy if my friends would send me a few lines of greeting on that day.

Cordially yours,

E. A. J. GOODELL.

(Mrs. M. C.)

TOYS FOR ANIMALS.

Olive Thorne Miller, in her charming little volume, entitled "Our Home Pets" just published by Harper & Brothers, thus speaks of the needs of furnishing birds amusements: "To make him thoroughly happy, a bird in a house needs some amusement. He pines for something to interest him; and, like a child kept in, he should be provided with playthings. A pet parrot that I knew once, though he had the freedom of his master's house, was furnished with a small basket of playthings,—a bunch of keys, a bit of chain, a spool or two, a few marbles, and other things. The bird knew as well as any child that the basket and its contents were his, and he made a great row if any one touched them. Many times a day he got down his basket, and amused himself an hour at a time with its treasures.

"Another bird—a parrot—had to be entertained every day; and, if people were busy and he was neglected, he helped himself to playthings. A favorite object was a spool of thread, from which he cut the contents with his sharp beak, and then demolished the spool. A lead-pencil or pen-handle to bite and reduce to slivers was acceptable; and, indeed, he could amuse himself with almost anything, and, when he was not supplied with a stock of his own, he was always in mischief.

"A thrush I once had used to amuse himself with the hanging fringe of a towel laid over a chair. He would run at it, try to pull out the threads, and, holding by the beak, swing back and forth with great relish.

"A crumpled newspaper laid on the floor is often a source of pleasure; also a ball that rolls easily, such as a marble. A string is the delight of most birds; but it is dangerous, for they are apt to tangle it around their legs, and frighten, if not hurt, them-

selves. Moreover, some birds will swallow a string, and suffer till they throw it up.

"All this may be accomplished with a bird without making him what is called tame,—i.e., so much at home that he will come at your call, alight on you freely, take food from your lips, and let you stroke or handle him."

ENGINEERING BY A MOUSE.

"While digging holes for telegraph poles at Byron, Me.," said a Western Union man, "I became interested in watching the ingenuity and perseverance of a mouse. He fell into one of the holes, which was four and a half feet deep and twenty inches across. The first day he ran around the bottom of the hole, trying to find some means of escape, but could not climb out. The second day he settled down to business. He began steadily and systematically to dig a spiral groove round and round the inner surface of the hole, with a uniformly ascending grade. He worked night and day; and, as he got farther from the bottom, he dug little pockets where he could either lie or sit and rest. Interested witnesses threw in food.

"At the end of two weeks the mouse struck a rock. This puzzled him. For nearly a day he tried to get under, around, or over the obstruction, but without success. With unflinching patience he reversed his spirel, and, went on tunnelling his way in the opposite direction. At the end of four weeks he reached the top, and probably sped away to enjoy his well-earned freedom. His escape was not seen. When his food was put in in the morning, he was near the surface; but at night the work was seen to be complete, and the little engineer, whose pluck and skill had saved his life, had left."—*New York Sun*.

Those who desire correspondents are requested to write to Miss Langmaid, the secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange. See address under "Directions." Those who send requests for reading, should send them to the Book Club secretary, Mrs. Nichols. Letters and requests of this sort, when sent to the editor for printing, are always delayed a month, and, in some cases, destroyed.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER
EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,—good citizens of the country,—for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

TRAVELLING LIBRARIES.

The Travelling Libraries have now become an important part of Cheerful Letter work. In order that this department may be thoroughly organized and systematized, Miss Louise Brown, Box 91, South Framingham, Mass., has kindly consented to take it in charge. Will those interested in these libraries, and desiring information, kindly address Miss Brown as above?

Kindly send subscriptions to the Treasurer, not to the Editor.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be no meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange in July, August, September.

The personal address of our treasurer, Miss Louise Howe, will be Little Nahant, Nahant, Mass., until further notice. But subscriptions may be sent to her or left for her at 25 Beacon Street, at any season.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Magnolia, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, Little Nahant, Nahant, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.